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ABSTRACT

Social Studies teachers need to emphasize reading instruction across the curriculum; they can consider 11 selected methods to assist pupil progress in reading social studies content. Recommendations include introducing new words from the reading; initiating peer reading and tutoring; having an aid read orally; tape recording the selection to be read; encouraging individualized reading; selecting relevant spelling words; and assigning related writing activities. The teacher needs to use these procedures which guide pupils to achieve as optimally as possible in reading. Ideas gleaned through reading should provide facts, concepts, and generalizations, necessary for creative and critical thinking as well as problem solving. (SC)

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Teaching Reading in the Social Studies.

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TEACHING READING IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

Social studies teachers need to emphasize reading instruction across the curriculum. The teaching of reading may occur simultaneously as learners extract vital facts, concepts, and generalizations from print discourse in ongoing lessons and units in the social studies (1).

Goals in Reading Social Studies Content

Social studies teachers need to be instructors of reading. Learners may acquire more information, than otherwise would be the case, if they comprehend print content in a meaningful manner (2).

What are selected methods to assist pupil progress in reading social studies content?

1. Introduce new words from the selection to be read from the basal, by printing these in neat manuscript letters on the chalkboard. Each word should be printed within a sentence contextually. Have pupils look at each new word carefully and have them use each word in a sentence orally. Use the experiences to provide background information and readiness for reading the new selection from the basal. To extend readiness, the teacher needs to discuss the related pictures in the basal. Pupils might then have questions pertaining to questions they wish to have answered from the sequential reading activity. These and other questions may be discussed in the follow up activity after reading the new selection from the social studies basal (3).
2. Assist pupils to do peer reading whereby each pupil in the small group reads orally to others. The content may then be discussed within the peer group.

3. Initiate peer tutoring involving a proficient reader and two or three others who need help in reading. The peer tutor may read orally as the others follow along in their basals. He/she might also guide pupils to recognize unknown words (4).
4. Permit an aid, under teacher guidance, to read orally the needed selection from the basal, as others follow along in their texts. The aid, with appropriate inservice education, should also listen to pupils read orally and discuss main ideas read. Retired teachers can be excellent aids in the classroom (5).
5. Tape-record the selection to be read. This oral presentation should be clear, articulate, and at a rate of speed that slower readers may follow along with in their own textbooks. Each pupil when following the cassette recording may notice, especially, the new words in discourse. Later, pupils may read the same subject matter and, hopefully, read the content with quality comprehension. An aid or a good reader might also make the cassette with clarity in oral reading.
6. Use individualized reading whereby each pupil may choose a library book to read that relates directly to the ongoing unit of study. Comprehension of contents in the social studies by the reader of the library book may be shared with classmates in the discussion setting.
7. Relevant spelling words for pupils to master may come from the introduced new words by the social studies teacher (refer to number one teaching of reading suggestion). These words in spelling may be used as enrichment or bonus words in spelling. Pupils can be challenged to master each word with correct spelling. Reading and spelling might well be correlated (6).

8. Determine ways to guide pupils in using content from social studies reading with related writing experiences, such as the following:

   (a) outlining and summarizing ideas read

   (b) writing ideas read to compose rhymed and unrhymed poetry

   (c) keeping diary entries and logs of what has been studied

   (d) journaling experiences by writing impressions, facts, concepts, and generalizations read

   (e) developing and labeling a bulletin board display

   (f) making a chart and writing items underneath each of the following categories such as the setting, characterization, major events, and time frame of these happenings, read from social studies script (7).

9. Find ways for pupils to use content read in writing experience charts. From what has been read or listened to in terms of subject matter content in the social studies, have pupils writ main ideas covered. The recorded ideas may be bound and reread. Pupils then read what they themselves have written.

   For primary grade pupils, the teacher may record on the chalkboard or using word processor those ideas learners gave from listening to social studies content. Pupils can see talk written down. After the writing has been completed, pupils may orally read the ideas recorded with teacher guidance as the latter points to words and phrases. Here, young pupils should be developing a sight vocabulary in these ongoing experiences (8).

10. Emphasize a Big Book philosophy of reading in the social studies. The Big Book has

print large enough for all pupils to see from their desks. The teacher provides readiness experiences for pupils and then points to the words and phrases read orally, first by the teacher and then together with pupils in the classroom. Rereading may also be stressed. Pupils then learn to identify new words, as well as obtain subject matter in the ongoing lesson and social studies unit.

11. Have pupils write play parts from subject matter in the basal, from a library book, or from a videotape. After the writing has been appraised and edited, select pupils to participate in formal dramatics by using the written play parts. Roles played by individual need appraising and feedback provided to the involved learner. Enjoyment of the drama is a key element to consider when pupils are active participants.

In Closing

Reading in the social studies is an important means of obtaining needed information. There are many approaches the teacher may use to assist pupils in comprehending print in ongoing lessons and units in the social studies. The teacher needs to use those procedures which guide pupils to achieve as optimally as possible in reading. Ideas gleaned through reading should provide facts, concepts, and generalizations, necessary for creative and critical thinking as well as problem solving.

Technology should have its salient role in reading social studies content. The internet and world wide web might well provide relevant social studies content for reading. CD ROMS also may make valuable contributions in reading print discourse. Content can be used for written discourse when using the word processor. Reading and writing do have their many connections.

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